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D/I, USAF CONTRIBUTION TO  
NIE-32: THE COMMUNIST MILITARY POSITION IN  
KOREA AND ITS EFFECT ON SINO-SOVIET COURSES OF  
ACTION IN THE FAR EAST

I. WHAT IS THE PRESENT NORTH KOREAN-CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY POSITION IN KOREA?

A. The Chinese Communist Air Force (CCAF) and North Korean Air Force (NKAF) are estimated to have available a combined strength of approximately 760 aircraft of fighter, ground attack, light bomber, and transport types, of which 200-250 are believed to be under control of the Soviet Air Force.

The combined personnel strength of the CCAF and NKAF is estimated to be at least 15,000, of which 1200-1500 are believed to be active pilots. In addition, about 3,000 CCAF pilots are reported to be in training schools located in China and Manchuria.

B. Estimated losses inflicted on the enemy by UN aircraft under FEAF control as of 10 February 1951 include the following approximations: 100 aircraft, 750 tanks, 675 field guns, 32,500 buildings, 1,600 trucks, 3,800 miscellaneous vehicles, 340 locomotives, 5,300 railroad cars, 400 bridges, 160 barges and boats, 125 warehouses, and 10 oil storage tanks damaged; 125 aircraft, 800 tanks, 925 field guns, 26,000 buildings, 2,500 trucks, 6,850 miscellaneous vehicles, 275 locomotives, 3,500 railroad cars, 200 bridges, 200 barges, 125 warehouses, and 50 trucks destroyed. A total of approximately 96,000 enemy troops are estimated to have been killed by air action.

C. To date there is no known distinction between first line and reserve manpower and equipment. (See Par. I, A, for combined personnel and aircraft strength of the CCAF and NKAF.)

D. This combined air force is largely dependent upon Soviet direction and technical assistance. Therefore, much depends upon the emphasis which the Soviets place on its continued development. Little is known of CCAF-NKAF stockpiling of POL, but there are indications that limited logistical capabilities would be a

Review of this document by CIA has determined that

☒ CIA has no objection to declass between first line and reserve manpower and equipment. (See Par. I, A, for combined personnel and aircraft strength of the CCAF and NKAF.)

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restricting factor in any sustained effort by this combined force. An additional limiting factor would be the relatively small number of trained personnel. The CCAF and NKAF are estimated to have a combined total of 1200-1500 active pilots.

E. With the exception of a few US types acquired by defection or capture from the Chinese Nationalists, all of the combat aircraft now available to the CCAF-NKAF were supplied by the Soviets. There is substantial evidence that the Soviets are now supplying the CCAF with radar, anti-aircraft equipment, and technical personnel and it is possible that SAV volunteer personnel are operating some of the aircraft currently available to the CCAF.

F. Maximum combined CCAF-NKAF sortie capabilities, based on an average of 3 missions during the initial 24-hour period of operations, are estimated to be 624 for fighters, 358 for ground attack aircraft, 284 for light bombers, and 113 for transports (airlift for approximately 2,800 troops). Combat and maintenance attrition would reduce the combat effectiveness of this combined strength to an insignificant level in about a week of sustained operations, unless substantially augmented by additional Soviet aircraft and technical assistance.

Based on the present capability of UN aircraft to render untenable for extensive operations those airfields in Korea under enemy control, it is assumed that any major CCAF-NKAF air effort would be launched from more distant bases in Communist China and Manchuria. So long as this situation prevails, and provided the Soviets continue to render only covert assistance, the CCAF and NKAF will not be capable of fighting a war of attrition.

## II. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE KOREAN CAMPAIGN AFFECTED COMMUNIST MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN THE FAR EAST?

A. 1. The Chinese Communists have utilized their air strength sparingly so far in the Korean operation and thereby have avoided serious attrition. No specific figure for enemy air personnel losses during the Korean operation are known. As of

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10 February 1951, enemy aircraft losses both on the ground and airborne were reported as 127 planes destroyed and 97 damaged. These figures include hostile aircraft encountered over Korea irrespective of their nationality. The Chinese Communists and North Koreans currently are estimated to have available approximately 760 aircraft. Since the Chinese Communist capabilities to launch air attacks have substantially increased during the Korean operation, despite the above-mentioned losses, and since the combat readiness of the Chinese Communist pilots also undoubtedly has increased with continued Soviet guidance and assistance and additional opportunity for training, it is not believed that Chinese Communist and North Korean losses in aircraft or pilots alone have been such as to force a curtailment of operations planned for the Korean campaign. On the contrary, the Chinese Communists now possess a greater capability to conduct aerial warfare than they had at the outset of the Korean operation.

2. Since the Chinese Communists are not known to have used aircraft to any appreciable extent, if at all, against internal dissident forces, the aircraft losses suffered by the Chinese Communists in the Korean operation have not hampered their capabilities for coping with internal forces in China hostile to Peiping. However, the concentration of the major portion of the Chinese Communist Air Force in North China and Manchuria has virtually precluded the use of their air strength against anti-Communist elements in China proper.

3. Since the Chinese Communist air capabilities have increased during the Korean operation and since the aviation losses suffered by them in that campaign have been light to date, it is believed that such losses alone have not caused, in whole or in part, the curtailment, cancellation or deferment of operations possibly planned by the Communists against Taiwan, Tibet, Indochina, Burma, Japan, or other objectives.

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B. 1. Continued Communist air operations in Korea on the present scale would not be likely to affect the Chinese Communist problem of coping with hostile internal forces inasmuch as the Chinese Communists are not known to have used their air strength to any appreciable extent, if at all, in operations against anti-Communist dissident forces in China.

2. Continued Chinese Communist-North Korean air operations in Korea on the present scale would not be likely to cause, in whole or in part, the curtailment, deferment or cancellation of operations possibly planned by the Communists against Taiwan, Tibet, Indochina, Burma, Japan or elsewhere. The Chinese Communists have utilized the aircraft available to them sparingly in the Korea operation and thereby have been able, with Soviet assistance, to increase their air capabilities despite some combat and operational attrition. It is probable that some of the Communist air strength has been allocated to the defense of industrial and population centers in Manchuria and China, but it is estimated that such defense requirements would not seriously reduce Communist air capabilities in any possible future operations against adjacent nations or Taiwan.

3. Although little is known of Chinese Communist-North Korean stockpiling of POL, continued air operations conceivably could place a strain on the domestic economy of China because of aviation logistic requirements in the absence of Soviet assistance.

4. Continued Chinese Communist-North Korean air operations in Korea on the present scale would not be likely to cause a significant drain on Soviet resources and logistic facilities, because of the restricted use of aircraft by the Communists thus far in the Korean operation. On the other hand, it is believed that the Soviets are continually gaining valuable experience and information with respect to the combat capabilities of their aircraft, especially the MIG-15<sup>jet</sup> fighters, and the combat readiness of air personnel trained by them.

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III. WHAT HAS BEEN THE EFFECT OF THE KOREAN CAMPAIGN ON COMMUNIST INTENTIONS IN THE FAR EAST?

A. There is no evidence to indicate that the Chinese Communists have modified their announced intentions to drive UN forces from Korea. However, the defeats which the Communists have suffered recently may have convinced them that they will be unable to drive UN forces from Korea and thus may have modified their announced intentions.

B. It is estimated that if the Communists concluded that it would be impossible to drive the UN forces from Korea under existing conditions, they would still retain strong Chinese Communist forces in Korea with a view to offering maximum resistance to the UN forces and holding as much Korean territory as possible. They would also attempt to capitalize upon any opportunity to spread dissension among the UN allies, perhaps by proposing a negotiated settlement without any sincere intention of arriving at a mutually acceptable settlement. Under these circumstances, the Chinese Communists would undoubtedly seek substantially increased Soviet aid to enable them to hold their military position. It is doubtful that such increased aid would be forthcoming unless the Soviets decided that such aid was essential in order to prevent the UN forces from achieving victory in Korea and occupying the territory adjacent to the USSR. If the Communists should estimate that they are capable of driving the UN forces from Korea, they probably will launch major military operations elsewhere in the Far East. On the other hand, if the Communists should conclude that they were unable to drive the UN forces from Korea, it is unlikely that they would attempt additional major military operations in the Far East because of the need for available manpower and materiel in Korea to maintain a holding operation. The decision to initiate military operations elsewhere would probably be governed primarily by the rate of loss of manpower and materiel in Korea. It is estimated that the current rate of loss is sufficiently high to preclude additional Far Eastern military operations

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if the Communists are determined to hold a substantial portion of Korea.

C. If the Communists should become convinced that the Chinese Communist position in Korea were becoming untenable, it would be logical for them, as a first step, to make a limited withdrawal into North Korea and to seek a negotiated settlement on as favorable terms as possible. Failing in this, it is believed that their actions would be governed by a determination to resist to the best of their ability the advance of UN forces and to prevent the occupation of the southern border of Manchuria and Maritime Siberia by hostile forces. The Soviets would be hesitant to invest further aid in Korea if they considered the Communist position untenable, but might invest additional aid if they estimated that it would be sufficient to enable the Communist forces to maintain a holding operation in North Korea. With the Communist position in Korea becoming untenable due to continuing high losses, the launching of major military operations elsewhere might become increasingly desirable as a desperate gamble if there seemed to be some chance of success. In spite of the risks involved, such operations might enable them to retain the initiative for a time and could divert some UN forces from Korea.

D. Recent reports concerning the attitude of the Chinese Communists toward negotiation of the Korean hostilities have been contradictory. It is estimated that they do not yet desire to negotiate a peaceful settlement, but might indicate a willingness to negotiate in order to create dissension among the UN allies, cause the UN forces to halt their present offensive, and gain time to strengthen their military position.

E. It is estimated that if it became clear that the Chinese Communists could not expel the UN from Korea, or if a long stalemate appeared probable, or even if a Communist expulsion from Korea were likely, the USSR would be unlikely to intervene openly because of the grave risk of war with the United States and the likelihood of global war. There is a possibility, however, that the Soviets might consider the

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presence of hostile forces on the border of the USSR as a casus belli.

Chinese Communist military operations in Korea are believed to be under over-all Soviet direction and to be an integral part of Soviet-directed world Communist strategy. Although the Chinese Communist leaders may well have had misgivings concerning the Chinese Communist military commitment in Korea, the fact that this commitment was made is considered strong proof that the Soviets dominate the Chinese Communists. The principal effect of current military developments in Korea on Sino-Soviet relations will probably be a progressively increased dependence of the Chinese Communists upon the USSR for materiel and technical assistance. However, if the Chinese Communist current military position obtains or worsens, the probability of serious differences between the Soviets and the Chinese Communist regime will increase, particularly if Soviet materiel and other assistance is not forthcoming in quantities considered sufficient by the Chinese Communists.

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